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I Claim:

1. A multi-purpose dental tool, comprising:

a handle formed as an elongate shaft having an operative first end and a second end; and

10 a measuring device comprising a channel formed in said shaft and opening to the second end, and measuring lines equally-spaced along said shaft proximate said channel for demarcating an extent of said channel relative to said second end.

2. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 1, wherein said channel is dimensioned to
15 accommodate insertion of a root canal file, and said measuring lines provide a visual indication of an extent to which a root canal file is inserted therein.

3. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 2, wherein said measuring lines are marked in millimeters with major intervals marked at every 5 millimeters.

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4. The multi-purpose tool of claim 2, wherein the operative first end of said dental tool is a dental mirror for use in viewing penetration of the root canal file into the root canal.

25 5. The multi-purpose tool of claim 4, wherein said dental mirror is circular mirror having

5 an approximate 22-24 mm diameter and mounted on said elongated shaft at an angle of
approximately 45 degrees.

6. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 2, wherein said channel further comprises an
open-faced groove extending into the second end of said shaft.

10 7. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 6, wherein said groove extends into the second
end of said shaft approximately 30 mm lengthwise along said shaft adjacent said measuring lines,
for receiving and measuring said root canal file.

15 8. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 7, wherein said groove is semi-circular in shape
with a diameter of approximately 1.0 mm and a radius of approximately .5 mm.

9. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 2, wherein said channel comprises an internal
channel for receiving and measuring said root canal file, and said shaft further comprises a
20 transparent window for viewing a root canal file inserted into said channel.

10. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 10, wherein said internal channel is cylindrical
in shape having a diameter of approximately 1.0 mm.

25 11. The multi-purpose dental tool of claim 3, wherein said shaft is formed from an

- 5 autoclavable and chemiclavable material consisting of one from among the group of fiberglass, plastic, ABS plastic, glass filled resin, stainless steel, nickel chrome steel, and polymers.

12. A dental instrument for measuring a distance, comprising:

- 10 - a shaft having a channel, for receiving a portion of a root canal file, running approximately thirty millimeters along its length and opening to an end of said shaft, said channel having a width and depth of sufficient dimensions to freely receive a root canal file and allow for a root canal file to freely slide along the length of the channel;
- 15 - measuring lines marked on a top surface of said shaft along the length of said channel and adjacent to said channel for providing a visual indication of an extent to which said root canal file is inserted into said channel relative to the open end of said shaft.

13. The dental instrument for measuring a distance as in claim 1, further comprising an
20 operative head portion of said dental instrument mounted on an end of said shaft opposite the channel.

14. The dental instrument of claim 13, wherein the head portion comprises a front
surface dental mirror.

25 15. The dental instrument of claim 13, wherein the channel is approximately 1.0 millimeter in width and approximately 0.5 millimeters in depth.

5 16. A method for measuring a depth of penetration of a conventional root canal file into
an apical foramen, comprising the steps of:

 fitting a stopper on one end of said root canal file;

 inserting said root canal file into a root canal until it reaches the apical foramen,
said stopper being urged backward along the root canal file during insertion, a distance
10 traveled by the stopper along the length of said file during insertion corresponding to a
depth of penetration;

 removing said root canal file from said root canal with stopper intact;

 inserting said root canal file into a channel formed along a handle of a dental tool,
said channel being demarcated with measuring lines equally-spaced along said shaft
15 proximate said channel;

 observing said measuring lines corresponding to the distance traveled by the
stopper along the length of said file during insertion into said root canal to ascertain a depth
of penetration therein.